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AUTHOR Dermond, Donna
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ABSTRACT

This curriculum guide is intended for a high school senior seminar program in which students (gifted, talented, and of all abilities) progress through three main stages: (1) identifying a project; (2) identifying a mentor; and (3) completing the project. The guide includes lesson plans, suggested activities, organizational diagrams, suggested timelines, and methods for evaluating outcomes. Specific suggested activities include: selecting a personally compelling project, journal writing as a tool for reflection, developing a personal timeline, identifying nourishing and toxic behaviors, developing group skills, role playing, understanding the matrix organization model, participating in group process, sharing compliment charts, building self esteem, writing to potential mentors, interviewing potential mentors, planning the project, carrying out the project, self evaluation, mentor evaluation, reporting on the project, and developing a portfolio. (DB)

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REFERENCE GUIDE FOR SENIOR SEMINAR

A Curriculum Development Project

by Donna Dermond

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**CHAPTER
ONE**

Overview

OVERVIEW

Senior Seminar is a program which was developed to prepare students to enter into the world outside the classroom. Students progress through the course in three main stages:

- * Identifying a project
- * Identifying a mentor
- * Completing the project

There are many learning activities involved in each of these stages. In order to identify a project, a student must first identify a need in the larger community which compels his/her interest. Many high school students have compelling interests outside the school environment, but finding meaningful work related to these interests is sometimes a challenge. Senior Seminar includes activities which help students reach the level of self-understanding necessary to identify personally compelling work.

The work each student undertakes must be personally meaningful because each participant must maintain interest in his/her project over time.

After the student has identified a project, he/she identifies a mentor with whom to work on the project. In order to select a mentor the student interviews several candidates. Each student must be clear about three major strands of mentorship: 1) what are the specific responsibilities of becoming a mentor; 2) how much time is involved in providing mentorship; and, 3) what are the advantages for the person who decides to become a mentor. Senior Seminar includes activities which help each participant learn the necessary skills to interview potential mentors, negotiate time commitments, and clearly communicate the advantages of mentoring.

The final stage of Senior Seminar is completing the project. In order to maintain work on the project over time, participants need support from other students. Senior Seminar includes group-building activities to enhance each student's group process skills. Students learn to "Seek help when needed, give help when asked." In addition, Senior Seminar teaches students to develop work plans, to plot critical tasks, and to set priorities. Projects are set up on a matrix plan which ensures that each participant in the program acts both as head of his or her own project and as a support person on at least one other project. This organization format reflects the way in which many businesses are organized and provides students with practical experiences which help prepare them for the workplace.

The following resource manual includes lesson plans, activities, organizational diagrams, suggested timelines, and methods for evaluating the outcomes of Senior Seminar.

**CHAPTER
TWO**

Senior Seminar Goals

**SENIOR
SEMINAR
GOALS**

1. To align students' interests and experiences to personally compelling work in the community for which they receive academic credit.
2. To provide students with opportunities for self understanding and acceptance through specific activities.
3. To enhance students' group process and communications skills through guided practice in the classroom.
4. To enhance students' self esteem by validating their interests and abilities even when they differ from those traditionally validated in the classroom.
5. To prepare students for the workplace by giving them opportunities to practice needed skills and to work with adults through mentorships.
6. To involve members of the community directly in the education process by having them act as mentors, make presentations, or participate in evaluating a completed project.
7. To develop a curriculum that matches students' abilities, experiences and interests.



Corbett High School Senior Seminar Class, 1990-91.

**CHAPTER
THREE**

Selecting a Personally Compelling Project

**SELECTING
A PERSONALLY
COMPELLING
PROJECT**

To select personally compelling projects, students must have some level of self-understanding. What are our goals? What do we want from life? What do we value? What do we want to do? How do we make choices?

As students begin to understand themselves more fully, self-esteem may improve as they set and accomplish appropriate goals.

Students in Senior Seminar must select projects which will maintain their interest for a minimum of 18 weeks. Their impulse may be to choose a project which the teacher likes or which they feel will be simple to complete. Thinking about what their goals and values really are will help students to choose a truly appropriate project, one which connects with their deepest interests, gives them personal satisfaction, and reflects the idea of meaningful, personally compelling work.

Several activities follow which will help students begin their self-exploration.



Daily journal writing.

**THE JOURNAL
AS A TOOL
FOR REFLECTION**

During Senior Seminar, each student keeps a personal journal. Specific uses for the journal are to set goals, to explore attitudes and feelings, and to use writing to get in touch with self. Since personal reflective writing is sometimes difficult for high school students, the journal is structured.

Following are some prompts for journal writing:

- * During the next few weeks, I hope to ...
- * Later, I hope to ...
- * Things I find easy to do are ...
- * Things that are difficult for me are ...
- * My strengths are ...
- * Things I would like to improve about myself are ...
- * Other people see me as ...
- * When I want to do more than just maintain day to day, I ...
- * The people who have helped me the most are ...
- * My happiest moments happen when ...
- * My accomplishments are ...
- * Challenges I have met are ...
- * My heroes are ...
- * I want to learn more about ...
- * The things I value most are ...
- * Some things I want to accomplish in the future are ...
- * My life is ...
- * I want my life to be ...
- * I am insecure when ...
- * I hide my abilities when ...
- * I am REALLY myself when ...
- * My main strength is ...
- * I feel secure when ...
- * Most people think I'm ...
- * When I don't like people, I ...
- * I like myself most when ...

Encourage students to use their journals for any personal writing they may wish to do. At the beginning of the course, each student sets down a written goal for the course in the journal. At the end of the course, each student evaluates how much of the goal was achieved. Journals may be exchanged with other students for written responses at any time during the course, or time may be set aside for this purpose.

Following are two more models for journal writing.

**THE JOURNAL
AS A TOOL FOR
INCREASING
SELF-
AWARENESS**

**"In touch with
reflective self..."***

If my house was on fire, and I could retrieve only one nonliving possession, it would be _____ because _____.

A verb that would describe me is _____ because _____.

The most important thing I would ever share with another person is _____ I would share it because _____.

I daydream most about _____.

Something most people know about me is _____.

Something few people know about me is _____.

I am most happy when _____.

I am most unhappy when _____.

The most difficult thing for me to write about is _____.

It is difficult because _____.

**THE JOURNAL
AS A TOOL FOR
CONSIDERING
THE FUTURE**

**"In touch with
emerging self..."***

When I double my present age, my most important nonliving possession will be _____.

List as many nouns as you would like to become.

The most important achievement I hope for is _____.

It is important to me because _____.

Eventually, I will probably have :
...an unlisted phone number
...an answering service
...a listed phone number

because _____.

The three most important things in my future will probably be:

* Stanish, Bob, *Lessons from the Hearthstone Traveler*, Good Apple: Carthage, IL, 1988.

**"In touch with
emerging self..."**
(continued)

As an adult I will be known for (circle appropriate items):

Being social
Being imaginative
Being in control
Being a risk-taker
Being conscientious
Being competitive
Being able to get along with others
Being sensitive
Being a leader
Being independent
Being trustful
Being a follower
Being happy-go-lucky
Being shrewd
Being practical
Being confident
Being hard to fool
Being realistic
Being _____

I believe this will be true because _____.

I suggest structured journal writing. Allow a few minutes daily for writing, especially at the beginning of the course. Later, students are likely to spend time out of class on their journals. Document journal writing in your gradebook once a week. You may give numerical values (5 points per entry) or just give a check for "done." It is very important that the journal be maintained. The goal is to have the student be entirely self-motivated to maintain the journal. Giving class time for writing and assigning points for entries help students get in the habit of frequent journal writing. As they become more involved with their project, the structure can be removed.

The journal will prove to be an extremely valuable resource for writing the project report at the end of the course.

THIS IS MY BAG

This activity is designed to illustrate that each person has both a public and private self. The self we reveal to the world is not the entire picture.

Materials:

- * One large paper bag or cardboard box
- * Scissors
- * Glue
- * Magazines, newspapers, photographs
- * Markers, pens, drawing supplies
- * Anything else students want to use.

Instructions:

Students design the outside of the bag or box to represent their outer selves. For example, athletes may want to draw their varsity jacket, or use photographs of themselves playing a sport. They may use pictures, drawings, colors or small objects to represent their public image.

Inside the bag or box, the students place pictures, objects, clippings, articles of clothing or anything that represents the more private aspects of their personalities.

Time line:

This project should take three to five days and should be done entirely at home. On the final day, the students display their bags and share them with other members of the class.

Debrief:

The class should be given adequate time to debrief about this experience. Debrief questions could include:

- * How did you feel about this activity?
- * What did you learn from this activity?
- * What person did you learn the most about?
- * What will you do with what you learned?



Sharing "My Bag."

PERSONAL TIME LINE

This activity is related to setting goals. The time line will be drawn twice. The first time it is drawn, it will represent the student's life from birth to 100 years. The time line should include the most significant events of the students' lives. It can include past, present and future events.

The second time the time line is drawn, it will represent the students' current academic year. This time line should include expectations and anticipated goals for the Senior Seminar project as well as other important school events.

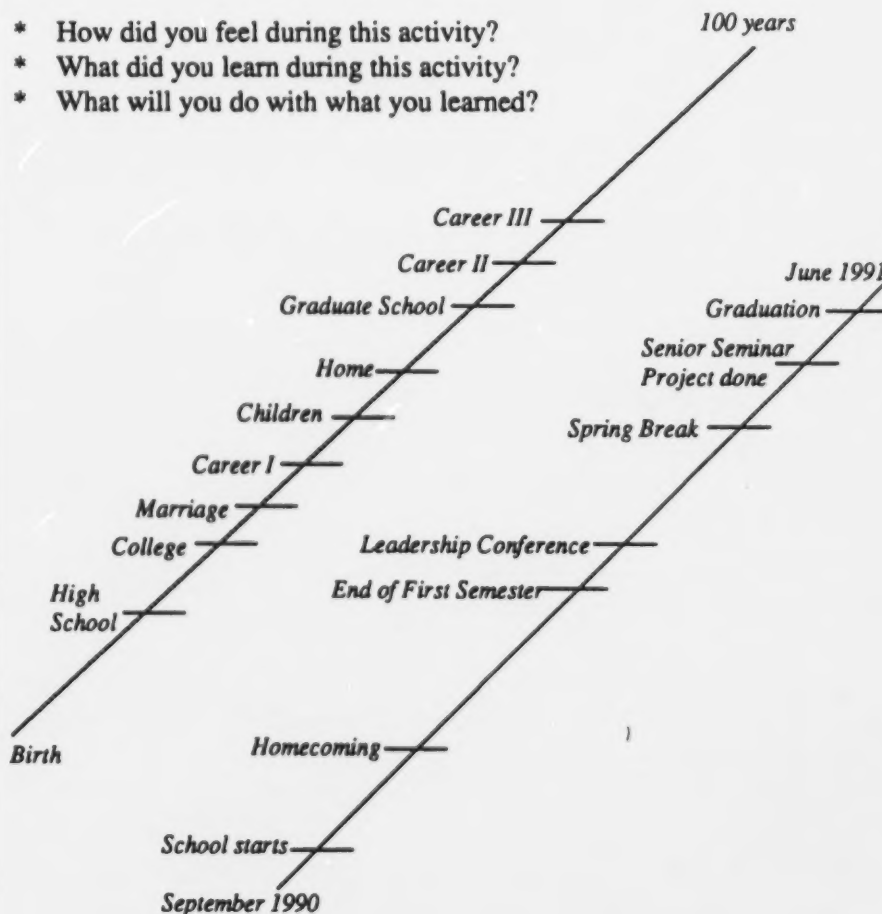
Below are examples of personal time lines. However, students may design their time lines in any clear format, using any materials they wish.

Time line:

This project should take 1-2 days and be completed outside class. Completed time lines are shared with the group.

Debrief:

- * How did you feel during this activity?
- * What did you learn during this activity?
- * What will you do with what you learned?



**NOURISHING
AND TOXIC
BEHAVIORS**

Objective: Students will develop a deeper understanding of themselves, their interests, attitudes and strengths.

Materials: A list of behaviors.

Method: A list of behaviors is presented to the students. They are asked to read each statement and then evaluate it as either nourishing or toxic. After students have completed the entire list individually, the group evaluates the list of behaviors together. Discussion of the behaviors on the list and the idea of nourishing vs toxic behavior follows.

List of behaviors can include:

- * A person becomes defensive because he doesn't get the job for which he applied.
- * A person withdraws from others because she is afraid they will laugh at her.
- * A person cries for another person because of a problem the other person has faced.
- * A person asks another person what is wrong because she knows her friend is upset about something.
- * A student tells the teacher that a member of the class cheated on a test.
- * A mother scolds her son when she is embarrassed because the son is not behaving in the store.

Closure: Allow students to write some of their own behaviors, evaluate them as nourishing or toxic, and then discuss them with the group. Note whether or not the individual's evaluation agrees the group's evaluation.

Debrief: Ask students:

- * What did you feel during this exercise?
- * What did you learn during this exercise?
- * What will you do with what you learned?

**CHAPTER
FOUR**

Developing Group Skills

GROUP SKILLS

Group skills are helpful in identifying a Senior Seminar project. Students who come into the class uncertain of their project may need to use the group to brainstorm possibilities. Once the project is identified, the group acts as a support system in which a student may develop and enhance his/her project.

Students need to know how groups function and how they can contribute to making groups function optimally.

Groups can lend support and assist in solving problems. Students who may feel isolated from their peers and their curriculum can begin to interact meaningfully in a group setting.

Often, in complex organizations where students may find themselves employed, teams from diverse departments may be working in convergent groups to solve complex problems. Group skills are essential in the professional world. Employers frequently and openly state that they hire team players. The Senior Seminar project is an excellent vehicle for learning and practicing group skills.

Group skills can also affect students' personal lives by showing them how to enhance family relationships and friendships. Many adults serve in civic and community groups in which cooperation and group process skills are essential. Learning and practicing group skills in the safety of the classroom setting can contribute to students' success in both professional and personal life.

Senior Seminar provides a meaningful and appropriate format in which to learn group skills. The group is helpful to some students as they go through the process of identifying the work they will do in the course. Students provide one another with help, encouragement and support as they work on their projects.

Senior Seminar projects can be carried out in teams which are based on a matrix concept of organization frequently used in business. When the matrix concept is used, each student acts as the head of his/her project while acting as a support person on another project.

Ideas about why and how groups are formed, how they function, and how they can enhance learning are discussed in the next few pages.

***How and why
groups are formed***

- * Groups are formed because they enable people to do tasks they could not do alone or because they enable people to do more work faster and better.
- * In order for groups to function, each member must receive some degree of interpersonal support.
- * Groups must maintain some degree of cohesion.
- * Groups must attend to the social needs of their members as well as the task at hand.

***Accomplishing
the task***

There are specific activities related to accomplishing tasks:

1. *Initiating* - Giving ideas or directions, suggesting goals, defining problems, suggesting ways to solve problems.
2. *Clarifying* - Building on others' ideas, interpreting, paraphrasing.
3. *Coordinating* - Putting ideas together, organizing, developing overall plan.
4. *Summarizing* - Pulling ideas together, providing focus.
5. *Recording* - Keeping track of the group's activity, making the group's ideas public.
6. *Evaluating* - Making critical judgments of ideas and suggestions.

***Maintaining
the group***

There are specific activities related to social maintenance:

1. *Encouraging and supporting*.
2. *Harmonizing* - Mediating differences, helping relieve tension and work through problems.
3. *Gatekeeping* - Keeping communication open and making sure every one has an opportunity to participate.
4. *Observing* - Keeping track of how the group is functioning, providing feedback to help the group function more smoothly.
5. *Following* - Accepting others' leadership, indicating support and agreement.
6. *Setting standards* - Defining norms to which member of the group will adhere.

ROLES IN GROUPS

An exercise to be done in class

Objective: To give class members a chance to practice a variety of role functions that are important to effective group process.

Method:

1. Review both task-oriented and social activities as they affect groups.
2. Form groups of 3 to 5 persons.
3. Have each group member privately write down one of the task or social roles he/she would like to try out or practice.
4. Groups are to spend 5 to 10 minutes discussing a topic of interest. During the discussion, each member tries to display the role he/she has privately written down.
5. After the allotted time has passed, stop the group. Members try to guess what role each was playing. When all the guesses have been shared, each member reveals the role he/she has written down.
6. Again, each member of the group privately records the role he/she will take in the next round of discussion. This time, however, group members pick roles they believe they do not do well, or that they would normally avoid.
7. Repeat step 4 with each group member displaying a different role.
8. Repeat step five. Ask groups to provide constructive feedback for one another.

Debrief:

Close with a final discussion. Some questions to consider are:

- * Are different roles needed in different groups?
- * Why are they needed?
- * Are some roles harder to observe than others?
- * Does categorizing roles as "task" or "social" make observation easier?

PHASES OF A GROUP

Groups develop by going through phases:

1. *Forming* - Individuals begin to see themselves as a group with a common task. Issues are involvement and cohesion.
2. *Storming* - Group members vie for leadership and control. Issues are direction and conflict management.
3. *Norming* - Group develops expectations about acceptable behaviors and an identity that sets it apart from other groups. Issues are agreeing on expectations and how to deal with members who do not meet the group's expectations.
4. *Performing* - Group members actively work together to solve a problem or do a task. Issues are individual performance and coordination.
5. *Mourning* - Group members share their common past (debrief) and prepare to go their own way.

An exercise to be done in class

Objective: to examine the phases of group development

Method:

1. Review phases of group development.
2. Divide class into five groups. Each group is assigned one of the five phases -- forming, storming, norming, performing and mourning. Each group will develop a 3- to 5-minute skit that illustrates its phase.
3. Each group will develop two skits. One will illustrate what actually happens during their phase, and one will illustrate how the "ideal" group would go through the phase.
4. Allow 20 minutes to develop the skits. Provide a 2-minute warning just before the 20 minutes are up.
5. Group will perform their skits in sequence, "forming" followed by "storming," etc. They perform only their "common practice" skit. After the skits are performed there is discussion about how groups are actually formed.
6. Now, groups go back and perform their "ideal" skits in sequence.

Debrief:

The class discusses the phases of group development and how to improve the way groups go through these phases. Discussion questions could include:

- * Did the skits reflect typical problems?
- * Were the "ideal" skits too perfect?
- * What phase of group development is this class in RIGHT NOW?
- * How could we improve our group function?



Individual reflection...



...group participation...



...and sharing feedback.

These ideas on group dynamics and exercises were taken from *Experiencing Management* by Marshall Sashkin and William C. Morris, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company: Reading, MA, 1987.

THE MATRIX ORGANIZATION MODEL

Matrix organization is widely used by business, industry, service organizations, professional organizations and nonprofit organizations.

The matrix defines a "web of relationships aimed at starting and completing specific projects."*

The matrix concept enhances positive interdependence and helps students learn to function productively in groups both as leaders and as followers. I have included the matrix under group skills, but it is equally important to consider the matrix as a tool for maintaining and completing the Senior Seminar project.

High school students have difficulty sustaining work over long periods of time. A school year seems longer to them than it actually is. If a student identifies a project by October 1, he/she will have approximately 160 school days until the end of the year. However, the project needs to be completed before the last day of school to allow time for evaluation and debriefing, as well as writing the project report. Let's estimate that the average due date will be 10 days before the end of the school year. The student now has about 150 class periods of school time to work on the project. Assuming that a class period is 45 minutes, the maximum actual school time students will have to give to their projects is 112.5 hours, or just a little less than three 40-hour weeks. However, some of this time will be spent on support activities and journal writing.

Senior Seminar instructors must address this issue at the beginning of the year so students understand that they must work steadily on their projects in order to finish on time with a high-quality outcome.

By using the matrix, every student will have the experience of seeking help from others when needed and giving help to others when asked. They will have the experience of heading up their own project and the experience of lending their skills and support to other projects.

Three essential elements of effective learning are ownership, time and help. Because students select their own projects, they will have ownership. Understanding the actual amount of school time they will have to work on their projects will help them schedule adequately and plan how many hours of outside time they will need to dedicate to their projects. The matrix will help them get the support they need at school and will enable them to maintain interest and motivation over long periods of time.

To build the matrix, student must know how much actual school time they have to complete their projects. They must also be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as those of other class members.

* *Organization Development and Change*, Edgar Huse and Thomas Hummings, West Publishing Company: St. Paul, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, 1985, p. 178.

Setting up the matrix

Before setting up the matrix, brainstorm a list of skills needed to complete the projects the students have selected. For example, creativity, organization, writing, designing, drawing, editing, focusing, paraphrasing, interviewing, etc.

Next, have students list the skills in which they feel they are strongest. In some cases, it may be helpful for the teacher to make observations about students' strengths.

Have students make a list of areas in which they feel they may need help from others. For example, a student may be very creative but lack motivation or focus or simply may be disorganized. A student who is capable of designing a recreational area may not have strong writing skills.

The next step is to match students' needs with other students' strengths. Negotiation will be necessary here because each student should work on no more than three projects, including his/her own. Each participant will therefore head up one project and lend support to one or two other projects.

When this process is complete, it is time to set up the actual matrix. Please refer to the sample matrix on page 22.

On a large sheet of butcher paper, draw a simple grid. Down the left hand column of the grid, write in the students' names. In the spaces at the top of the grid, write down the names of the projects. Write "Team Captain" in the box that corresponds to the student's name and his/her own project.

In one or two other boxes write the name(s) of the student(s) who will provide project support. In the same box, write what specific tasks or skills they will be contributing to that project.

Next, students negotiate the percentage of their support person's time they will be allowed to use. It is *essential* that students spend a *minimum* of 50% of their school time on their own projects. Any remaining time may be distributed between the other two projects on which they will serve. Time that is not spent lending support to others will be spent on their own projects. Once the matrix is completed, students will realize that they will need to spend time outside of class on their projects.

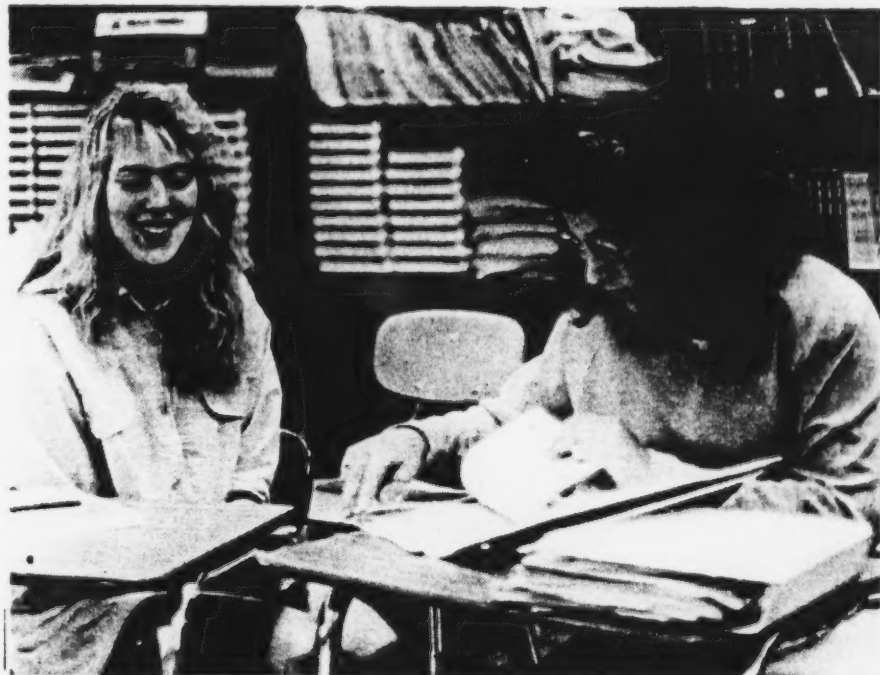
Teams meet during school time to work on projects. Time for and attendance at these meetings are major issues. The instructor is responsible for facilitating team relationships. Every team member need not attend every meeting, and the meetings may be brief. For example, a student might say to a support person, "I will need to meet with you to discuss a new idea I have for my project. May I have 10 minutes on Thursday?" The matrix provides an excellent forum for practicing negotiating skills!

In the real world, matrix teams are formed because no one person has enough skills to complete complex projects on his/her own. In order to complete the projects, the skills of many people must be combined effectively. In schools, this idea is illustrated by drama productions, team sports, fundraisers, dances, the school newspaper, etc.

It may be possible for a student to complete a Senior Seminar project independently. However, the *product* is less important than the *process* any student goes through to complete it. Matrix organization minimizes procrastination and encourages completion of subtasks, because other students are involved and their time must be considered.

Matrix organization as it is used in Senior Seminar will not always reflect true interdependence as it does in the real world, but it will reflect this kind of interdependence to some degree. It also fosters group and individual process and enhances commitment to the projects and to other students. Furthermore, matrix organization encourages students to use time productively and helps sustain motivation.

Businesses use matrices to complete complex projects. In Senior Seminar, the matrix has the additional use of helping teams to sustain focus, interest and responsibility.



Students lend support to each other's projects.

Name	Belle of Amherst	Booklet	Poetry	Child's Book	Recycling	Public Art	Basketball League	Senior Banquet	Big Brother/Sister	Total
Corrie	50%			10% Peer Response			10% Red Tape Cutter			70%
Angelina (Jenny L.)		50%				15% Photographs				65%
Angela			50%	10% Peer Response					15% Peer Response/Edit	75%
Paul	20% Publicity Design		25% 5 Illust.	50%						95%
Todd	15% Set Design			50%						65%
Melany				10% Encouragement	50%					60%
Craig						50%	5% Publicity Design	10% Program Design	10% Publicity Design	75%
Andrea		10% Editing					50%	20% Creative Consult.		80%
Cristy			5% Editing					50%		55%
Sonya					15% Organization	10% Comm. Consult.			50%	75%

GROUP PROCESS

Allowing students to work together is not true group process. Real group process occurs when students experience a degree of structured interdependence. This interdependence exists because a task is too complex for one person to complete in isolation or because individuals need support and feedback from others to maintain or improve the quality of their work.

In many classrooms, instructors encourage competition. Students have learned to function in isolation and to view others as competitors for grades on finished products. Often, they do not know another's strengths, especially if a particular strength is one not validated by the system. They may view depending on another student's work as "cheating."

The idea that the best work is the result of a lengthy process is foreign to many high schoolers. They tend to concentrate on producing a product at the last minute that is "better" than another student's and to ignore process.

Following are some activities that enhance group process skills. The Senior Seminar classroom must be structured so that each individual considers other members of the class as allies. Group process applies to both small groups and to the class as a whole.

PICTURE INTERVIEWS

Objectives: To have students in the class get to know one another.
To have each student introduce another to the group.
To give each student an opportunity to address the class.

Materials: One large sheet of butcher paper and a marker per student.

Instructions: Students work in pairs. One student interviews his/her partner, and then the roles are reversed. Each student asks his/her partner the same four questions:

- * What was your proudest moment?
- * What is your most prized possession?
- * If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would it be?
- * What is your most important accomplishment?

The interviewer does not write down the interviewee's answer but draws pictures to represent the answers. At the end of the exercise, each sheet of paper will have four pictures on it. Interviewers then present interviewees by interpreting the pictures drawn.

Debrief: Have student respond to the following questions:

- * How did you feel during this exercise?
- * What did you learn from this exercise?
- * What will you do with what you learned?

SHARING CIRCLE

Objectives: To give students a chance to relate to others in the class
To build discussion skills.
To build listening skills.
To enhance awareness of others.

Materials: A list of questions designed to go beyond superficial depth.
(A sample list of questions appears on the following page.)
Students may eventually make up their own questions.

Instructions: Everyone sits in a circle, including the instructor. The instructor asks a question, and the student next to him/her responds. The response must include a repetition of the question. Responses continue until everyone in the circle has responded. Individuals have the right to say "pass" if they do not wish to respond to the question. At the end of the rotation, return to those students who have passed to give them an opportunity to respond. They are not required to provide a response. The instructor also responds to every question and models interest and appropriate listening. Each member of the circle looks at the person who is responding. During the responses, there is no comment, discussion or debate. NO opinions are expressed verbally or by body language. NO value judgments are allowed. All responses, including "pass," are accepted positively. The task to be accomplished in Sharing Circle is to DISCOVER other people. At the end of the exercise, discussion may be opened up.

Debrief: Using the Sharing Circle model, ask questions which probe the students' reactions to the exercise such as:

- * Which person did you learn the most about today?
- * Which person would you like to know more about?
- * Which person hid him/herself the most?
- * Which person was the most open?
- * What image did you want to project to the group?
- * Which person was the most (least) like you?
- * Which answers were the most insightful?
- * Which answers surprised you the most?

Then ask the following questions:

- * How did you feel during this exercise?
- * What did you learn during this exercise?
- * What will you do with what you learned?

**SHARING
CIRCLE
QUESTIONS**

These questions represent an almost limitless number of questions which teachers and students could generate for this exercise.

- * If you could go to dinner with any famous person, who would it be?
- * If someone wrote a book about you, what would its title be?
- * How would you describe yourself to a stranger?
- * What, in your opinion, is the most serious problem facing the world today?
- * How do you show respect for people?
- * Whom do you love the most? Why?
- * What would you most like to know about the person seated on your right?
- * What makes you the most angry?
- * Who is your hero?
- * What is the highest priority in your life right now?
- * How would you change your life to make it better?
- * Where do you see yourself being in five years?
- * If you could give someone any gift you wanted, what would that gift be? To whom would you give it?
- * What is one of your greatest dreams?
- * If you could be reincarnated, what would you come back as?
- * If you could relive one day of your life, which one would it be?
- * If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?
- * Describe yourself in one word.
- * What is the most important characteristic of a friend?

Now generate questions of your own...



Students participate in a sharing circle.

CONSENSUS CIRCLE

Objective: To help students see the similarities they share with the members of a group, while getting in touch with their individuality.

Materials: One large sheet of butcher paper per group of four.
One marker for each student.

Instructions: Divide the class into groups of four, and seat each group around a large sheet of butcher paper. Give each student a felt tip marker. One student draws a large circle in the center of the paper. Group members take turns telling something they like or dislike. When they discover something on which they can all agree, that idea is written around the circumference of the circle. For example, pizza is a favorite food, or deforestation is the most serious environmental problem. After groups have reached their consensus, stop the activity. Tell students to divide the circle into four wedges, using their markers. Each student will now have one quarter of the circle in front of him/her. Now, each member of the group must find something unique about him/herself and write that in his/her portion of the circle. For example, "I was born in Peru." When the students have finished the activity, they will have a graphic representation of how unique individuals can form a cohesive group.

Debrief: Ask students the following questions:

- * How did you feel during this activity?
- * What did you learn from this activity?
- * What will you do with what you have learned?



Consensus circle shows how individuals can form cohesive groups.

COMPLIMENT CHARTS

- Objectives:** To help students see positive characteristics in every member of the class.
To build a positive attitude toward others.
To enhance self-esteem.
- Materials:** One piece of butcher paper for each member of the class
One felt tip marker for each member of the class
Masking tape
- Instructions:** With masking tape, attach sheets of butcher paper to the backs of each member of the class. Distribute marking pens. Have every student write something they like about each member of the class on that person's back. All compliments should be specific, not just "You're nice." Students should exchange pens to assure anonymity. After everyone has written on everyone else, the lists are removed and shared with the class.
- Debrief:** Ask the students the following questions:
- * How did you feel during this activity?
 - * What did you learn from this activity?
 - * How will you use what you have learned?



Students write compliments to each other.

COCKTAIL PARTY

Objective: To enhance students' awareness of how they communicate.

Instructions: Ask students to think about how they would most like others to perceive them. Next, ask them to think of a statement that conveys the quality they would like others to see in them. For example, "Understanding" and "Tell me your problems." Instruct the students to go around the room repeating their statement to everyone while others do the same. Everyone talks and no one listens. After a few minutes, the instructor says, "Freeze!" Everyone stops, and then says the opposite statement. For example, "Go away! Don't bother me!" After a few minutes, the instructor stops the activity, and the group discusses what happened.

Discussion question include:

- * Which statement was more powerful the first, or its opposite?
- * Which statement most closely represents the real you?
- * What did this exercise teach you about communication?
- * What did you learn about the importance of listening?

Debrief: Ask the following questions:

- * How did you feel during this exercise?
- * What did you learn from this exercise?
- * What will you do with what you learned?

STANDING OVATION

Objective: To enhance self esteem.

Method: Put each student's name of a 3x5 index card. Mix the cards so that the names will come up in random order. Each day at the beginning of class, take the top card. The person whose name appears on that card will receive a standing ovation from the class. This is to be a REAL OVATION, complete with loud applause and cheers. At the end of the ovation, put that card on the bottom of the stack. Do an ovation each day.

TELEGRAMS

Objective: To enhance self-esteem.

Method: Cut paper into 3x5 inch pieces or use 3x5 index cards. You may design them to look like telegrams. The person who receives an ovation on a given day receives telegrams from each member of the class.

The telegrams must be positive. For example, "I like you,
(Student's Name) because _____

The telegram must be signed. Students may want to design the telegram format themselves.

You may have noticed that the debriefing questions on these exercises are essentially the same.* The Senior Seminar instructor should ask the same questions after each exercise. Eventually, the instructor may simply say, "Answer the debriefing questions in your journals." The students will be familiar with the questions, and the written debrief affords them privacy. This method also saves class time when necessary.

* Debriefing questions are from *The Autonomous Learner Model*, developed by Dr. George Betts.

**CHAPTER
FIVE**

Identifying the Mentor

IDENTIFYING THE MENTOR

What is a mentor?

Mentor relationships, like all relationships, are both complex and unique. During the course of Senior Seminar, each student will develop a relationship with a mentor. But what exactly is a mentor and how do you find one?

A mentor performs many roles. Each student's mentor may not perform every role, but each mentor will fulfill specific needs for his/her student. Among the functions of a mentor are expertise, advice, support, perspective, feedback, acceptance, understanding, and, for Senior Seminar, evaluation of the project. This list is incomplete because students will depend on their mentors for individual needs.

Senior Seminar instructors will find it helpful to ask members of the community if they are willing to act as mentors for participants in the course. This request must be made with the understanding that willingness to act as a mentor may not result in being a mentor. Students will identify and select their own mentors. On the following pages you will find samples of letters to send into the community which ask not only for mentorship, but also for suggestions for projects. Keep the responses to these letters in a file. The file will be your cache of community resources. You will find that the vast majority of people in your community will be positive in their responses. In the Corbett community, where Senior Seminar was first piloted, over 50 percent of the community inquiries were returned with positive responses.

Where do you find one?

Ask your colleagues to participate as mentors or to suggest projects. When everyone feels that they are a part of Senior Seminar, the program flourishes.

Willing mentors are sometimes found where you are least likely to look. Students may find a mentor on your faculty or in the administrative offices of your school. Our superintendent acted as a mentor to a student in the pilot project who wrote a brochure for our district. School board members have made suggestions for projects ranging from a radio station to designing a golf course in our area. Our P.E. teacher suggested an in-school recycling business as a Senior Seminar project and volunteered to act as a mentor to the student who decided to take on that project. Grandmothers and grandfathers or aunts and uncles can be powerful mentors. Retired people are excellent mentors because they often have time to invest in students and their projects. Elected officials are good potential mentors, especially for students who are interested in civic or political projects. If a student has a job, his/her supervisor may make an excellent mentor. Other students can also be mentors. Another participant in our pilot project planned a benefit rock concert, and his mentor was a member of his band, a young man who had graduated from high school the previous year and who had experience in planning this kind of event. Professional people such as lawyers, doctors, veterinarians, social workers, etc. are often

willing to act as mentors. Surprisingly, many people are able to offer mentoring in areas outside their professions. If you have a Grange in your community, you may wish to contact them. Unions and professional organizations are another potential source of mentors.

Another dimension to community support is to ask a business or organization if it is willing to sponsor a student's attendance at a professional conference. Even if they do not feel they have the time to donate to a mentor relationship, they may be willing to provide the financial support necessary to allow a student to attend a conference.

***What do you ask
people to do?***

Never hesitate to ask for support. Most people are willing to help. Consultants, architects, and members of business organizations may be willing to have students accompany them to various meetings and workshops. Be sure to ask. The Chamber of Commerce, Elks, and other service organizations should not be overlooked.

***How do you
find one?***

There are three things on which students must be clear before they begin the process of identifying a mentor. First, their projects must be clearly defined. Second, students must be clear and specific about what they will expect from the mentor. Here, it is essential that they be able to define the time commitment for the mentor. Finally, students should be able to show how entering into a mentorship will benefit the mentor. Students have a lot to offer adults. Their enthusiasm, energy and creativity can provide very real benefits to those who choose to function as mentors. In addition, mentors will feel the satisfaction of providing help to the next generation and actively participating in the educational process. Public schools become more truly public when community members act as mentors.

Following are sample of letters and forms to be sent to members of your community.

**SAMPLE
COVER
LETTER**

Dear _____:

_____ High School is offering a new course, Senior Seminar, designed to help students make the transition between school and the community. Our goal is to give students real-life experience in the community before they leave school and assume a place in society. We want to establish a close link between what is learned in Senior Seminar and what actually happens in the world.

In order to accomplish our goal, we need community members to be mentors to students who are undertaking various projects. Would you be willing to serve as a mentor? Your role as a mentor would be to help a student carry out a project. Frequently, students come into Senior Seminar with a project already in mind. However, this is not always the case, so we would appreciate your suggesting a project idea.

Projects can be related to your business, such as planning a marketing strategy for a new product or service, or they can be related to important community issues such as timber harvest, homelessness, or use of the Sandy River. These are only possibilities. Please feel free to suggest any topic which interests you.

Your name and project proposal will be filed for student reference.

If you become a mentor you will receive the benefits of our students' enthusiasm, creativity and energy. Most importantly, you will be helping prepare our young people for the future.

Would you please fill out the enclosed forms and return them to me in the envelope we have provided? If you have any questions, please call me at home (number) or at school (number). If you would like to meet with me to discuss the course or a specific project, I will be happy to arrange a meeting with you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

**SAMPLE
COMMUNITY
SURVEY**

___ Yes, I am willing to be a mentor for Senior Seminar. Please give me more information.

___ I would like to learn more about Senior Seminar.

___ No, I can't be a mentor at this time.

___ Some other people who might be interested are:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Your name: _____

Business or organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Please list any ideas you have for Senior Seminar projects:

**SAMPLE
PROJECT
PROPOSAL FOR
COMMUNITY
MEMBERS**

Your name: _____

Your organization: _____

Phone: _____

Project title: _____

Describe the problem or issue this project involves:

Suggest an approach you think the student might use:

What product do you think will result from this project?

Comments and suggestions:

**SAMPLE
FOLLOW-UP
LETTER FOR
MENTORS**

Dear _____:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a mentorship with _____ . Community support and participation in the education of our students is welcome and appreciated. _____ will be in touch with you to arrange the details of your collaboration on what we know will be an interesting and worthwhile project.

When the project is complete, we would ask that you participate in evaluating the outcome. We will send you a brief form to fill out at that time which provides us with your feedback. Should you want to confer with me during the course, please contact me and we will arrange a meeting at your convenience.

Sincerely,

INTERVIEWING SKILLS

The most important skill a student will use in identifying a mentor is interviewing. Most high school students have experience with being interviewed, but few have experience interviewing someone else.

The two activities that follow are designed to help students learn and practice important aspects of conducting interviews. If possible, videotape the Personal Interview Activity. Show the interviews to the class and ask for feedback. Playing the interviews back is time-consuming but very valuable. Students seeing themselves on tape is the most effective lesson that students can have on the importance of body language, dress, gestures, eye contact, etc.

The second activity is a lesson which teaches students Bloom's Taxonomy of the Intellect so that they will be able to control how they frame interview questions. They will learn that answers to questions in interviews change with the level on which the question is asked. They will be able to restate questions on varying levels of the taxonomy to ensure they are getting both the amount and the kind of information they need from the person they are interviewing.

Of course, the interviewing skills they practice here are not limited to identifying a mentor. They will be useful to students who will write questionnaires or conduct surveys as part of their projects. These skills will automatically spill over into students' experiences in interviewing for jobs and/or colleges as well.

Understanding Bloom's Taxonomy is also a valuable tool for improving learning and test-taking performance across the curriculum.

As always, be sure to allow time for debriefing after these activities. These experiences are new to many students, and they need to talk or write about how they are affected by them. Use the same debriefing questions as on previous activities so that students may begin to debrief in their journals without instruction. Repeating the debrief also provides students with a consistent mental framework for thinking about how these exercises affect their learning processes.

THE PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Objective: To have students conduct a personal interview.

Materials: List of interview questions. (See following page.)

Instructions: Students work in pairs. They move their chairs so that they are facing their partner. Instruct students to communicate directly with their partner and to make eye contact. Distribute a list of questions. Give students a few minutes to review the questions. They are free to eliminate or add questions at their discretion. The object is to get to know the person they are working with.

One person in each pair begins by asking questions of the second student. The second student responds. Encourage the student conducting the interview to pursue areas of interest by asking additional questions which may not be on his/her list of things to ask. At the end of the interview, the interviewer summarizes what he has learned about the responder. The second student then responds to the feedback in a dialogue with the first student.

The process is repeated for the second student in the pair.

Active listening and eye contact should be evident throughout the activity.

Debrief: Ask the students the following questions:

- * How did you feel during this activity?
- * What did you learn from this activity?
- * What will you do with what you have learned.

These questions may be opened up for discussion or addressed in the journal, or a brief discussion can be followed with time for journal writing.

**SUGGESTED
QUESTIONS
FOR A PERSONAL
INTERVIEW**

1. What do you like most about yourself?
2. What are you presently doing to develop yourself personally?
3. What is something you would like to improve about yourself?
4. What opportunity would you like to have that you do not have now?
5. How do you express concern for others?
6. Are you involved in community service?
7. What is your deepest interest?
8. What things do you do best?
9. Describe your idea of a perfect job.
10. What is one question that you would like me to ask you?.
11. Add questions of your own.



Students practice interviewing skills.

**CONCEPT
FORMATION
LESSON...***

**...on Bloom's
Taxonomy of the
Intellect**

Objectives: To give students practice recognizing questions on all cognitive levels.
To give students practice rewording questions on different levels.
To help students form the concept of questioning on different cognitive levels.

Materials: Hand-out on Bloom's Taxonomy to be distributed the day before and read outside class. Students may refer to the handout during the lesson.
Thirty questions written out on 5x8 cards, five questions for each of the six levels of Bloom's.

Instructions: Tape all the questions on the board or wall in *random* order.

Ask students to put the questions into groups with common characteristics. Have the students label the groups of questions. Ask the students questions about why they grouped the cards in the way they did. For example, "What are the characteristics of each group? How are the items in each group interrelated? Why did you put this card in this category?" Now have students reword questions so that they would fit into another category. Finally have the students hypothesize about what they have done. For example, ask "What would happen if all questions were framed just like the ones in this group?" Finally, ask students to make a generalization about the underlying concept of the lesson and why it is important for them to master this concept.

Debrief: Ask students the following questions:

- * How did you feel during this lesson?
- * What did you learn during this lesson?
- * Rate your learning from 1-10. (optional)
- * How will you use what you have learned?

*The Concept Formation Model is from Hilda Taba.

THE RESOURCE PERSON

Every student who participates in Senior Seminar may not achieve a true mentor relationship with an adult or fellow student. This is perfectly all right. However, all students in Senior Seminar will work on some level with a person who acts as a resource for their projects. Whether or not the students find true mentors, they will leave the course with the experience of having worked with someone outside the class who enhances their skills, provides them with feedback and adds to the quality of their completed project. However, the GOAL of Senior Seminar is to identify a person who can be a real mentor, who provides not only the expertise students will require, but also personal support, trust and caring.

Distinguishing between a mentor and a resource person is a valuable skill. Students should learn about the advantages of both kinds of relationships and not be made to feel that developing working relationships with resource people is less desirable than developing a mentor relationship. Students should be aware of what true mentorship is and be helped to understand that they may enter mentor relationships later in life at college or in their workplace.

SUMMARY

- * The interviewing practice that the previous activities provide will prove valuable in a variety of settings.
- * Familiarity with Bloom's Taxonomy of the Intellect will enhance communication skills, as well as improve discussion skills and test-taking skills across the curriculum.
- * Learning the difference between mentors and resource people will help students understand that interaction with others can be meaningful and helpful on more than one level. Distinguishing between these roles will provide students with practice in clarifying their needs and negotiating to get their needs met.

**CHAPTER
SIX**

Carrying out the Project

**SEEING THE
PROJECT
THROUGH...**

Completing the Senior Seminar project is the ultimate goal of the course. However, the instructor must always remember that the underlying assumption of Senior Seminar is to help students be aware of the processes they go through to complete their projects. In the final analysis, the process will subsume the product. A student may not completely finish the project and still receive credit for the course on the basis of what he/she did accomplish.

***What happens if
it isn't finished?***

One girl who participated in our pilot program completed all the in-class activities, conducted and videotaped her in class interviews, conducted extensive primary source research for her project by interviewing several community members, took photographs to illustrate her project, identified a mentor, kept a journal, compiled and organized many pages of data, provided valuable feedback and support to others in the class, and wrote an excellent project report which addressed not only her successes, but also realistically discussed why her project, a community history, was not completed. This student also donated her partially completed project to Senior Seminar in the hopes that another student would choose to complete it. I gave her credit without a moment's hesitation, based on her significant accomplishments.

Maintaining focus

High school students find it difficult to maintain focus over long periods of time. As mentioned before, they will not have as much in-school time as they think they will to dedicate to their projects. Please refer back to the matrix to review how it can help students avoid procrastination and complete subtasks on schedule.

Many students are used to seeing the finished product as the first priority. As a result, they give in to old patterns of procrastination. They easily convince themselves that they can postpone starting the project or start the project and then ignore it until the last minute. They are used to seeing their learning as a series of products, often produced without real involvement or commitment. The process concept is sometimes quite alien to high school students.

In addition to the matrix there are other specific ways to enhance focus and enable students to maintain work on their projects over time.

I would suggest that each student make a third time line to get an overall view of the project and to determine when crucial subtasks must be completed. For example, if a student is planning a fundraising project that requires a rented space, he/she must reserve that space early. If their project involves bringing in panelists or speakers, they will have to schedule in advance to accommodate others' schedules. If they are doing a writing project that requires research, they will need to have that research completed far enough in advance to allow for writing and rewriting.

Have the students put specific dates on their project time lines. "October" makes it too easy to procrastinate. "October 10" is much more compelling. Of course, they will find that they need some flexibility, but they need to experience setting and meeting goals in a timely fashion.

Students seldom realize how difficult it can be to rent a space or to obtain commitment from a speaker. Check each time line carefully to make sure the time allowances each student makes are realistic. For example, if the project is a public event, the student will have to begin publicity much earlier than he/she will likely anticipate without the instructor's input.

***Negotiating
for time...***

Occasionally, a student will need a large block of time to work on his/her project. Finding the necessary time can require some creative problem solving. One strategy we used in our pilot was a "time share" concept. Students who needed to have an entire day for their projects would obtain permission from their other teachers to be excused from that class for a day. I would agree to give back a Senior Seminar period for each period missed so that students would have time to complete their make-up work.

***Leaving
the campus...***

Students often leave campus to work with mentors, meet with resource people, or to do research. For reasons of liability, we kept written parental permission forms on file for each participant in the pilot. We have a sign-out policy at our school, and the attendance secretary kept track of which Senior Seminar participants had signed out to work on their projects; and also was responsible for the returned permission forms. You may want to limit the number of days per term that each student is allowed to spend off campus. This minimizes the chance of truancy and helps each student schedule and use time prudently and efficiently.

**SAMPLE
PERMISSION
TO LEAVE
CAMPUS**

Date _____

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your son or daughter is enrolled in Senior Seminar. During the school year (term), each student in Senior Seminar will design and complete a project in the community with the assistance of a mentor. Occasionally it is necessary for students participating in the course to leave the high school campus during school hours to meet with mentors or to work on various aspects of their projects. We need your written permission for your son or daughter to leave campus. Please fill out the consent form below and return it to us at the school.

If you have questions or concerns, please call me at _____.
Thank you.

Sincerely,

Senior Seminar Instructor

_____ has my permission to
(*your son's or daughter's name*)
leave _____ High School campus during regular school
hours in order to work on his/her project.

(your signature)

(your phone number)

(date signed)

(date received)

In addition to the project time line and negotiating for flexible hours during regular school time, there are several other vehicles for helping students maintain focus on their projects.

I strongly recommend that each student complete a formal project proposal. In our pilot program we also used a student contract. Sample forms for both the proposal and the contract follow.

**STUDENT
CONTRACT**

I, _____, by signing this contract, commit to
(name)
completing a Senior Seminar project. The tentative title of the
project is _____. I will have identified a
(title)
mentor by _____. My mentor and I will meet
(date)
a minimum of _____ times during the course of the project's
completion. In addition, I will confer with my instructor _____
times during the project period. I will present my project on
_____. My presentation will consist of _____
(date)

(description)

(student signature)

(date)

(instructor signature)

(date)

**SENIOR
SEMINAR
PROJECT
PROPOSAL**

The type of project I will complete is: _____

The origin of my idea is: _____

The reason I chose this project is: _____

Sources of information I plan to use are: _____

Some of the things I hope to learn from completing this project are:

When the project is complete, what I will have produced is: _____

WORK PLANS

Formal work plans help students complete their projects. There are many existing models for designing work plans. When students design work plans, they are providing structure and definition for their work on the projects. Designing personal work plans on projects students have conceived themselves is both empowering and motivating. Students achieve a level of control over their own performance that they may not have experienced before.

Each student is required to submit a proposal and a personal work plan before they begin work on the actual project.

What are they?

A work plan is a description of the tasks necessary to complete a project. When combined with a project schedule, it provides a blueprint and timetable for activities relevant to the project. It will be the students' guide in managing the project, and it will help the instructor and other students working on the project know what is happening.

One of the most useful benefits of developing a work plan is to lay out and thereby comprehend what the sequence of activities must be to get the work accomplished.

How do we make one?

How does a student design a work plan ?

Steps in developing a work plan are:

1. Clarify what the end product is.

Start by clearly identifying what the end result of the project is. For example, it might be a concert, service, business or product.

It might be helpful to identify intermediate products such as a draft, sketch or design.

2. Identify the major tasks.

First describe the major tasks necessary to complete the project. These are numbered as 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, etc. It may be helpful to sketch out a flow diagram in order to identify major tasks. There is an example of a flow diagram on page 52. Try to keep the number of main tasks to six or less. Use a consistent method of describing them. For example, say "conduct interviews," "meet with mentor." In these examples, a verb is followed by a noun.

Subtasks can then be developed under the main tasks and numbered as 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc. These can be broken down further into other subtasks. This provides a hierarchy of tasks.

Example:

1.0 Main task

1.1 Subtask (level one)

1.1.1 Subtask (level two)

1.1.2 Subtask (level two)

1.2 Subtask (level one)

2.0 Main task

2.1 Subtask (level one)

2.1.1 Subtask (level two)

2.1.2 Subtask (level two)

2.2 Subtask (level one)

For a project that involves more than one person, roles and responsibilities can be assigned for each task and subtask.

3. Construct a project schedule.

Using the major tasks, the first level of subtasks and perhaps the second level of sub tasks, write down tasks along the left margin of a sheet of paper. Across the top of the sheet, draw a timeline. This can be set up for days, weeks or months, depending on the nature of the project.

Starting at the END date, work backwards to rough in the time each task will take. Draw in a bar for each task. Bars can overlap where activities will be carried out simultaneously. However, if task 3.0 can only proceed after 2.0 is completed, these tasks cannot overlap. It is a good idea to include some "float" time midway in a project. This is extra time in case a task is late in being completed.

Add in *MAJOR MILESTONES* which are events such as a presentation to the class, a meeting with a mentor, or the completion of a draft or design.

4. Identify roles and responsibilities.

On the left hand side of a second sheet of paper, enter the same tasks as on the first sheet. In columns to the right indicate who has the responsibility for the tasks and who will assist. Put in notes that will help you define roles and responsibilities.

A sample of the work plan described above follows.

**SAMPLE
WORK PLAN**

Benefit Concert for Homeless Youth

Task	Time (in weeks)													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	Jan					Feb				Mar				Apr (etc.)
1.0 Organize band														
1.1														
1.2														
1.2.1														
1.2.2														
2.0 Contact non-profit organizations														
2.1														
2.2.1														
2.2.2														
3.0 Find site														
3.1														
3.2														
3.2.1														
3.2.2														
4.0 Recruit staff														
4.1														
4.2														
4.2.1														
4.2.2														
5.0 Organize publicity														
5.1														
5.2														
5.2.1														
5.2.2														
6.0 Conduct concert														
6.1														
6.2														
6.2.1														
6.2.2														

Symbols may be added to flag significant activities during the project such as meetings, or reports. Check points may also be added as symbols.

A sample of how to assign roles for tasks and sub tasks follows.

**SAMPLE
DELEGATION
CHART**

Tasks	Roles		Comments
	Lead	Assist	
1.0 Organize band	name	name	
1.1	name	name	
1.2	name	name	
1.2.1	name	name	
1.2.2	name	name	
2.0 Contact non-profit organizations	name	name	
2.1	name	name	
2.2	name	name	
2.2.1	name	name	
2.2.2	name	name	
3.0 Find site	name	name	
3.1	name	name	
3.2	name	name	
3.2.1	name	name	
3.2.2	name	name	
4.0 Recruit staff	name	name	
4.1	name	name	
4.2	name	name	
4.2.1	name	name	
4.2.2	name	name	
5.0 Organize publicity	name	name	
5.1	name	name	
5.2	name	name	
5.2.1	name	name	
5.2.2	name	name	
6.0 Conduct concert	name	name	
6.1	name	name	
6.2	name	name	
6.2.1	name	name	
6.2.2	name	name	

An alternative model for a work plan is the flow chart, a visual representation of how the tasks will proceed.

THE FLOW CHART MODEL

Benefit Concert for Homeless Youth



STUDY PROJECTS

"Study" projects are those projects for which students conduct a study. They may elect to do an environmental study, a land-use study, a market analysis, or any number of other similar projects.

Tasks for this type of project tend to flow in a predictable way. A general guideline for the proper sequence of tasks for a study project are:

1. Gather data through a review of literature, interviews, surveys, etc.
2. Analyze data.
3. Develop recommendations
4. Draft a report.
5. Review the report with the mentor and/or instructor.
6. Prepare the final report which includes recommendations.
7. Make a presentation based on the report.



Individual time for study.

WHAT DOES THE INSTRUCTOR DO?

Completing the Senior Seminar project requires ownership of the work, commitment to the work, and a basic understanding of how to proceed. If students are clear about these aspects, they will be able to finish quality projects.

The instructor acts as a guide, a facilitator, a resource person, or even a counselor during the completion of the project. Even though each student will go through many of the same activities, each individual's process will be unique.

It is essential that the instructor allow participants to explore their own processes and to experience some struggle. One boy who decided to write a brochure for our school district struggled with writing. It took him several weeks and many drafts to complete the copy for his brochure. I was sorely tempted many times to step in and show him how to do it. I DIDN'T! During one of his numerous drafts, he looked at me and said, "People are going to read this." He had made the connection between writing and audience that I have tried to impart to writing students so many times. I think it is significant that he did it, not during English class, but while doing meaningful work for the district, work that would be truly public and for which he would receive recognition from the community. He said later that he felt the brochure was the most significant thing he had done during his 12 years of school.

Senior Seminar is truly student-centered. Instructors must believe that students can do the work. We need to step back and to step in only when asked or when we perceive an urgent need. The success of the course depends on our willingness to relinquish some of our control over students' work and to allow them to control it themselves. Individual students will let us know when they need our support.

Of course, instructors need to monitor progress, offer help and encouragement, and make suggestions, but the major work is student-directed.

This kind of learning sometimes feels risky for instructor and student alike, but it provides a significant return.

CHAPTER
SEVEN

Evaluation

EVALUATION

Who evaluates?

Evaluating the work accomplished in Senior Seminar is a shared task. Participants evaluate their own projects as well as the other participants' projects. The instructor evaluates each project as well as participants' personal growth. The mentor also evaluates the students and their projects. I suggest that, before a final grade is given, the instructor meet with each student to discuss both the quality of the experience and the quality of the project. I found that it was helpful to ask every student privately what they thought their final grade should be. I also offered each student the opportunity to receive a credit with no grade.

During the course, many of the activities can be evaluated using a point system. "This Is My Bag," the time lines, the personal interviews and journal entries, among others, can be graded. Points can also be assigned for returning completed contract and project proposals.

After the project is completed, each student writes a formal project report which can be graded in a traditional way. The report asks for comments on the process the student went through to accomplish their goal, so it provides a basis on which to evaluate this important aspect of the course.

I want to emphasize the importance of having people other than the teacher evaluate the work. One important goal of Senior Seminar is to provide students with real world experiences and, in the world, peers and resource people often provide feedback on projects. If the instructor is the only evaluator, the project becomes more like "school" work and less like "real" work. The Senior Seminar projects are public and require feedback from members of the public.

Following are forms for evaluating Senior Seminar projects as well as participants' personal growth during the completion of the projects.

**SELF-
EVALUATION**

Student Self-Evaluation Form

My goal was _____
_____.

The extent to which I met my goal was _____%.

I would describe my relationship with my mentor as _____
_____.

A key thing I learned was _____
_____.

What I liked best about doing this project was _____
_____.

The thing I liked least about doing this project was _____
_____.

When I presented my project, I felt _____
_____.

The grade I would give my project is (circle one) A B C D P/F

Comments _____

_____.

Please attach additional sheets if necessary.

Student Self Evaluation Narrative Form

Write a brief essay describing your experience in Senior Seminar. Include how you felt during the course, what you learned from doing your project and how you believe the course has helped you. How will you use what you have learned in Senior Seminar? Describe and evaluate your experience with your mentor. How has your project made an impact on the community?

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be from a notebook or a set of legal pads. There is no handwriting or other markings on the page.

Please attach additional sheets as necessary.

**THE PROJECT
REPORT**

Outline for Senior Seminar Project Report

The goal

Describe goal

Estimate percent of goal accomplished

The work

Money spent

Time invested

Things that worked well

Things that you would do differently

The finished project

Compare with original concept

Evaluate importance to the community

Evaluate the quality of the work

The mentor (resource person)

Evaluate relationship

Evaluate quality of help and support received

The process

Describe your personal process

Describe your feelings during course

Describe what you learned

Describe what you will do with what you learned

Evaluate your level of personal satisfaction with your work

Summation

I suggest that you complete these self evaluation activities in order.

**EVALUATING
OTHERS IN
THE CLASS**

Student Evaluation Form

Please use this form to provide feedback to other students.

Presentation	low		average		high
--------------	-----	--	---------	--	------

* clear	1	2	3	4	5
---------	---	---	---	---	---

* interesting	1	2	3	4	5
---------------	---	---	---	---	---

* understandable	1	2	3	4	5
------------------	---	---	---	---	---

Presenter

* confident	1	2	3	4	5
-------------	---	---	---	---	---

* audible	1	2	3	4	5
-----------	---	---	---	---	---

* committed to work	1	2	3	4	5
---------------------	---	---	---	---	---

* motivated	1	2	3	4	5
-------------	---	---	---	---	---

Product

* quality	1	2	3	4	5
-----------	---	---	---	---	---

* interest	1	2	3	4	5
------------	---	---	---	---	---

* usefulness	1	2	3	4	5
--------------	---	---	---	---	---

Comments _____

The grade I would give this project is (circle one) A B C D P/F

**EVALUATION
FROM THE
MENTOR**

Mentor Evaluation Form

Please complete this evaluation form for _____
and return it to _____
_____, by _____. Thank you.

	low		average		high
1. Courteous	1	2	3	4	5
2. Responds well to instruction	1	2	3	4	5
3. Shows responsibility (keeps appointments, meets deadlines)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Shows commitment (works steadily on project)	1	2	3	4	5
5. Sets and meets goals	1	2	3	4	5
6. Works independently	1	2	3	4	5
7. Interpersonal/communication skills	1	2	3	4	5
8. Overall quality of product	1	2	3	4	5

The grade I would give this project is (circle one) A B C D P/F

Do you have any suggestions for the student? _____

Do you have any suggestions for improving the Senior Seminar program? _____

Additional comments or observations? _____

Please attach additional sheets if necessary. Thank you.

We appreciate your participation in this program!

EVALUATING STUDENTS' PROCESS

Following is a form to evaluate students' personal and cognitive growth as they go through Senior Seminar. These forms should be filled out five times a year: at the beginning of the course, and during first, second, third and fourth quarters. At the end of the course, you can use the forms as a visual map of the students' progress in these areas. You may share these forms with students during their final conferences.

If you are offering Senior Seminar as a semester rather than a full-year course, you will need to adjust the number of forms you use to fit your own needs. I suggest three times per semester: at the beginning of the course, mid-term and at final grade time.

The form consists of five growth objectives followed by a rating scale. You may want to have the students generate their own growth objectives at the beginning of the course. The whole group may brainstorm objectives and then reach consensus on the five that are most important to them.

Another option is to have students fill out their own forms during the year (term) in addition to the instructor. Then, during final conference time, the participant and the instructor can discuss the similarities and differences between the ratings and reach a consensus about each rating.



Conferences help keep students focused on the process.

**PERSONAL
EVALUATION**

Senior Seminar Personal Evaluation Form

Student's Name _____

Date _____

	low		average		high
Shows increased self-awareness	1	2	3	4	5
Demonstrates understanding of group process	1	2	3	4	5
Utilizes creative problem- solving techniques	1	2	3	4	5
Develops interpersonal communications skills	1	2	3	4	5
Develops evaluative thinking skills	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

Completed by: _____

**CHAPTER
EIGHT**

Portfolios

PORTFOLIOS

In October, 1990, Lewis and Clark College announced that they would no longer require the SAT for admission to their college. Among options for admission was application by portfolio.

Portfolios have been a traditional part of academic competitions in Multnomah County, the best known being Academic All Stars. Portfolios have also been used to identify talented and gifted students. Some teachers of writing, fine arts and graphic arts have also used portfolios as a part of their evaluation process. However, the majority of high school students do not complete portfolios as a part of their course work.

There are many advantages to compiling a portfolio. Portfolios provide a format for students to compile their best work and their finest accomplishments. The emphasis of a portfolio need not be academic; it therefore allows students who are not as successful academically as others to exhibit their strengths. Portfolios allow students to express their interests and personalities in creative ways. They also give students a meaningful overview of what students have accomplished during high school.

Portfolios are useful to students and may give them a competitive advantage as they apply for colleges or for jobs. For example, if a student wants to work part-time for an architect during college, a portfolio of their art work may be of more interest to the perspective employer than an academic record. If a student wants to work as an athletic camp counselor, a portfolio may provide a more accurate profile of the student to the person hiring than just letters of recommendation.

Compiling a portfolio is not easy and takes time. The fact that a person just entering the business world has a portfolio at all may give him/her added credibility as he/she makes the transition between high school and the working world.

A portfolio can enhance students' self esteem as they see visual evidence of their accomplishments. Compiling a portfolio can teach self-evaluation as students make decisions about what to include and what to omit. Students can be creative as they build their portfolios and enrich them with graphics, photos, slides, drawings, etc. and as they decide on their layout and format.

As students leave school, they should have something tangible to take with them, something that documents their learning, their abilities, their experiences, their accomplishments and successes. A portfolio is an effective way to provide them with this.

GUIDELINES FOR PORTFOLIOS

Portfolio contents should include:

- * A letter of transmittal
- * A table of contents
- * A one page autobiography, including future goals
- * A picture of yourself
- * A description of your Senior Seminar project
- * A copy of your project report
- * Samples of your best work
- * Award certificates for athletics, academic achievement, service
- * Any newspaper clippings about your activities or achievements, including outside activities such as scouting, 4H or church
- * Up to five letters of recommendation from three teachers, the academic counselor, a person who has worked with you on outside activities or an employer
- * A copy of your high school transcript
- * Your SAT results (optional)

Be sure to include all your significant activities and accomplishments, whether or not they are directly connected to school, for example, from your job, from your church or from clubs that are not school sponsored. Include travel and other enrichment experiences. This is a *curriculum vitae* or documentation of all your experiences and accomplishments.

The portfolio should be in a three-ring binder and each page put in a page protector. You may enhance the portfolio with photographs, slides, graphics, drawings, or even audio and video tapes.

Your portfolio should reflect your personality. It will be useful to you as you apply for colleges and employment. You all have accomplished many important things. Let your portfolio reflect this fact.

Start early to get the best result and have fun with it!

**CHAPTER
NINE**

Summary

SUMMARY

The basic concepts of Senior Seminar -- identifying community needs, designing work to meet those needs, committing to and sustaining the work, providing support and feedback to others, working with mentors and resource people, producing outcomes that are meaningful and satisfying, learning through personal experience in the world -- will find varying applications in the lives of the individual students who participate in the course. Students will design personal curricula that are fresh and original.

In addition to the plans and suggestions made in this booklet, I would like to provide some general guidelines to those teachers who will be Senior Seminar instructors.

- * Be sure to include the opening personal awareness activities and also be sure that projects such as "This Is My Bag" are shared with the class.
- * Continue group-building activities throughout the year (term). I would suggest a minimum of twice a month.
- * Monitor journal entries and assign points for them, especially at the beginning of the course.
- * Have each participant present a progress report to the class at the approximate midpoint of the course. This event should be included on the project time line. Consider grading this report.
- * Make sure that each participant is clear on the expectations of the course. All students must agree to select personally compelling work, to lead a team, to lend help and support on another team, and to complete all other activities.
- * Take the time to construct the matrix model for your group.
- * Believe in the students - - they can do it!

***A WORK
IN PROGRESS...***

This booklet is really just a place to start. Instructors who facilitate Senior Seminar classes will undoubtedly use techniques not included above. I can also guarantee that each one will have insightful anecdotes about their experiences with the course.

Please send any thoughts, ideas, or stories about your experiences or those of your students to:

Donna Dermond
3333 N.E. 18th Avenue
Portland, OR 97212

I will gladly include them in the next edition of this guide as we build Senior Seminar together. All contributions will be credited. Thank you.

Acknowledgements

My husband, Kurt Wehbring, shared his knowledge and experience in business, and helped me design ways to apply these in my classroom

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Agelina Cerruti, 1990-1991 Senior Seminar participant, took the photographs for this reference guide.

Christa McAuliffe's vision of teaching and love for children have become a true source of inspiration to me.

About the Author

In March, 1990, author Donna Dermond was named the Christa McAuliffe Fellow for Oregon. Senior Seminar grew from her experience teaching talented and gifted students at Corbett High School. She believes that experiential, self-directed learning may be applied to students of all abilities to help engender skills not normally gained from the traditional educational curriculum.

Ms. Dermond, originally from Olympia, Washington, received her bachelor of arts degree in British Literature from the University of Montana, and her master of arts degree from Lewis and Clark College. Her teaching experience includes five years of public education in Oregon, one year at Hillside Hutterite Colony, near Sweetgrass, Montana, consulting work with school districts throughout Oregon, and instruction at colleges and workshops.

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